



## Objectives

1. To introduce the artistic and writing skills of Kevin Henkes through a study of several of his books.
2. To provide students with opportunities for written and artistic expression.
3. To allow personal reflections of materials read.
4. To integrate technology and mathematics with literature.
5. To increase reading comprehension through a variety of activities such as reading for detail, sequencing and finding the main problem of a story.



Kevin Henkes

American author Kevin Henkes excels in two areas—writing and illustrating. He writes both novels and picture books and enjoys going back and forth between the two types of books.

He was born in Racine, Wisconsin, on Nov. 27, 1960. He was the fourth of five children. Since his youngest sibling wasn't born until six years later, he was able to experience being the youngest for quite a while. During his childhood he would go to the library often. He enjoyed reading books by Crockett Johnson, Garth Williams and William Steig. He took art lessons at a museum. It wasn't until junior high school when a teacher encouraged him, did Kevin think much about writing, as he was always more interested in illustrating. In high school he pursued writing. He went to the University of Wisconsin in Madison. At age 19 he flew to New York with a portfolio of his work, hoping to find a publisher. Within a couple of days he signed with Greenwillow. When he was 21, *All Alone* was published.

Henkes lives in Madison with his wife, Laura, who is a painter, and their son Will. He has a dog and a cat.

Kevin Henkes uses everyday incidences in his story. His characters reflect childhood emotions. He thought mouse characters would add more humour to his stories. He doesn't know exactly why he chose mice but as a child, he did have a cup with a mouse head and eyes that moved. While on a book tour, waiting in an airport, he saw a little girl with a plastic purse driving her father crazy. He thought the purse would be perfect for Lilly and wrote *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. He dedicated it to his son, Will. His inspiration for *Julius, the Baby of the World* came from his niece who didn't like becoming an older sister. He remembered feeling jealous when his youngest sibling was born. When writing picture books, Henkes tries to avoid any excess words to tell the story concisely, and keep the young reader's interest.

Henkes has received some awards for his writing. In 1986 *Weekend With Wendell* was named Children's Choice Book by the Children's book Council. In 1988 *Chester's Way* was a notable book by the American Library Association. In 1993 he received the Elizabeth Burr Award for *Words of Stone*.

Sheila Rae, The Brave • A Weekend With Wendell •

Chrysanthemum • Owen • Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse



Story Summaries and Themes

Seven of Kevin Henkes's books with his mouse characters have been chosen for this unit. Below is a brief story summary of each and themes with which they could be used.

Following the story summaries are suggestions for follow up activities (vi-xi) which can be used after reading several Henkes books.

Chester's Way

Chester and his friend, Wilson, are very much alike. They decide they don't like Lilly because she is very different. However, they learn that differences can be good. They also find out that they have things in common with Lilly.

Themes: Values, Friendship, Differences

Chrysanthemum

Chrysanthemum's love of school is spoiled by kids teasing her about her name, until she meets Mrs. Delphinium Twinkle, who thinks Chrysanthemum's name is perfect.

Themes: Names, Differences, School

Julius, the Baby of the World

Lilly's jealousy of her new baby brother is very difficult to overcome until Cousin Garland scoffs at Julius. Lilly comes to her brother's defence and realizes she loves him, and that he is the baby of the world.

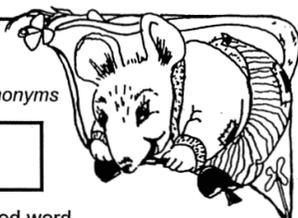
Themes: Family, Babies, Jealousy

Sheila Rae, The Brave • A Weekend With Wendell •

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Julius, Baby of the World

Synonyms



A **synonym** is a word that means the same or almost the same as another word.

Rewrite each sentence using a **synonym** for the underlined word. Choose your synonym from the words in the box.

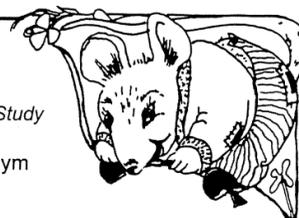
trembled	continually	patted	offending
terrible	sneak	tiny	suppress
	ghostly	merry	

- They admired his small black eyes.
- They stroked his sweet white fur.
- She yelled insulting comments into his crib.
- We must tell him constantly how beautiful he is and how much we love him.
- Lilly, let's restrain ourselves please.
- "Trust me, they're dreadful," she said.
- Lilly had glorious dreams about Julius, And ghastly nightmares too.
- When Lilly's mother felt up to it, she planned a festive celebration in honour of Julius.
- Her tail quivered.
- Cousin Garland tried to slink out of the room.



Julius, Baby of the World

Word Study



Rewrite each sentence in another way by using a synonym or phrase for the underlined word or words.

- "What lung capacity, Lilly!"
- "Lilly, let's restrain ourselves!"
- Why don't you put some of that verbal exuberance to good use?
- Lilly tried to frighten Julius with her nifty costumes.
- Lilly spent more time in the uncooperative chair.
- The relatives hovered over Julius.



# Julius, Baby of the World

Syllables



- Beside each word print the number of syllables you hear.
- Arrange the word list in alphabetical order.

Number of Syllables	Alphabetical Order
antique _____	_____
celebration _____	_____
compliment _____	_____
disguise _____	_____
extraordinary _____	_____
information _____	_____
uncooperative _____	_____
perfume _____	_____
quivered _____	_____
opinion _____	_____
capacity _____	_____



# Julius, Baby of the World

Comprehension



You feel jealous when someone gets more attention than you do;  
OR  
when you wish you had something that another person has;  
OR  
when you'd like to do the things others are doing and you can't participate.

Tell about **one** of the following situations:

- You felt jealous of a younger brother or sister.
- You are the youngest and you felt jealous of your older brother or sister.
- You are an only child. If you had a brother or sister, what would make you jealous?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

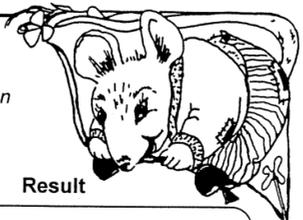
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\_\_\_\_\_



# Julius, Baby of the World

Comprehension



Draw a line to connect each action with its result.

Action

Result

Lilly's mother asked her to tell Julius a nice story.

Lilly's parents were amused.

Julius blew a bubble.

Lilly's parents told her to act her age.

The parents wanted Julius to be as clever as Lilly.

Lilly made up a story called, "Julius, The Germ of the World by Me".

Lilly babbled and gurgled like Julius.

Lilly's nose twitched, her eyes narrowed, her fur stood on end and her tail quivered.

Lilly's mother planned a celebration in honour of Julius.

Lilly spent more time than usual in the uncooperative chair.

Cousin Garland called Julius disgusting.

All the relatives came.

Lilly tried to frighten Julius with her disguise and make him disappear with her magic.

The parents sang numbers and letters to Julius whenever possible.



# Julius, Baby of the World

Character Study

Beside each adjective, mark an X to show Lilly's degree of feeling.

When Julius was first born, Lilly was...

	Not At All	A Little Bit	Quite A Bit	Very
jealous				
kind				
obedient				
hurtful				
helpful				
affectionate				
cooperative				

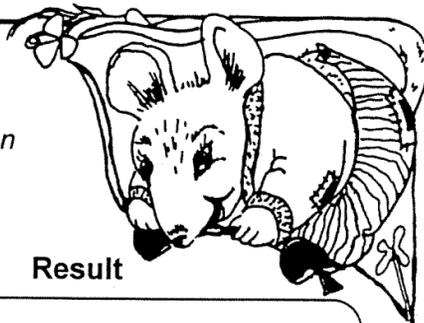
After the party, Lilly was...

	Not At All	A Little Bit	Quite A Bit	Very
jealous				
kind				
obedient				
hurtful				
helpful				
affectionate				
cooperative				



# Julius, Baby of the World

Comprehension



Draw a line to connect each action with its result.

## Action

Lilly's mother asked her to tell Julius a nice story.

Julius blew a bubble.

The parents wanted Julius to be as clever as Lilly.

Lilly babbled and gurgled like Julius.

Lilly's mother planned a celebration in honour of Julius.

Cousin Garland called Julius disgusting.

Lilly tried to frighten Julius with her disguise and make him disappear with her magic.

## Result

Lilly's parents were amused.

Lilly's parents told her to act her age.

Lilly made up a story called, "Julius, The Germ of the World by Me".

Lilly's nose twitched, her eyes narrowed, her fur stood on end and her tail quivered.

Lilly spent more time than usual in the uncooperative chair.

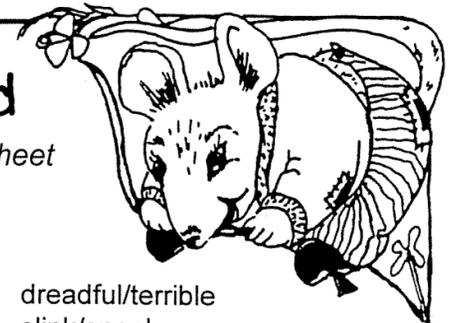
All the relatives came.

The parents sang numbers and letters to Julius whenever possible.



# Julius, Baby of the World

Answer Sheet



## 1. Word Study/Synonyms

small/tiny	stroked/patted	insulting/offending
constantly/continually	restrain/suppress	dreadful/terrible
ghastly/ghostly	festive/merry	quivered/trembled
		slink/sneak

## 2. Comprehension/Turning Point: Cousin Garland calls Julius 'disgusting' and says his eyes are beady, his nose is slimy and his fur is not sweet-smelling, causing Lilly to react protectively.

### Examples of Lilly's jealousy:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. took her things back                                   | 9. pretend he didn't exist   |
| 2. pinched his tail                                       | 10. tried to copy things he did to get attention from parents (blow bubbles, etc.) |
| 3. yelled insults into his crib                           | 11. make up mean story about him   |
| 4. asked about him going away                             | 12. told friends babies were dreadful  |
| 5. shouted while he slept                                 | 13. warned strangers about babies  |
| 6. tried to confuse him by mixing up alphabet and numbers | 14. ran away 7 times one morning   |
| 7. tried to frighten him with disguises                   | 15. made tea party and invited everyone but him.                                   |
| 8. tried to make him disappear with magic                 | 16. dreamed terrible dreams about Julius   |

## 3. They told her they wanted Julius to grow up to be extraordinary and clever like her. They showered her with hugs and kisses. They let her stay up 15 minutes later every night. They tried to get her involved by having her tell Julius a story. They showered her with compliments, praise and niceties.

## 4. Comprehension/Matching

- Lilly's mother asked her to tell Julius a nice story/Lilly made up a story called "Julius, the Germ of the World by Me".
- Julius blew a bubble./Lilly's parents were amused.
- The parents wanted Julius to be as clever as Lilly./The parents sang numbers and letters to Julius whenever possible.
- Lilly gurgled and babbled like Julius./Lilly's parents told her to act her age.
- Lilly's mother planned a celebration in honour of Julius./All the relatives came.
- Cousin Garland called Julius disgusting./Lilly's nose twitched, her eyes narrowed, her fur stood on end and her tail quivered.
- Lilly tried to frighten Julius with her disguise and make him disappear with her magic./Lilly spent more time than usual in the uncooperative chair.

